

An Essay
on
Cholera

Respectfully Submitted
to the Faculty of the
Homoeopathic Medical College
of
Pennsylvania

On the first day of January
Eighteen Hundred & fifty five

By A R Thayer
Of Philadelphia

By the term Cholera is generally understood a disease characterised by nausea, griping, purging & vomiting whose location is confined principally to the Cræmentary Canal.

Various appellations have been given this disease viz, Cholera Morbus, Spasmodic Cholera, Cholera Asphyxia Asiatica, or Malignant Asiatic Cholera. It is generally understood that the various names used, denote separate & distinct diseases; but we shall endeavour to show that they are only modifications of one disease. That stage of the disease termed Cholera Morbus which is so prevalent during our summer months is only a modification of the original disease already mentioned and like that it has one great original cause for its existence.

Let us first consider the disease usually termed Cholera Morbus. This generally commences with a sudden feeling of nausea, griping, purging & vomiting; in some cases it is accom-

-panied

by coldness of the extremities, hurried
respiration, excessive thirst, a feeling
of cramp in the legs & arms, spasmodic
contractions of the abdominal muscles,
hollow & pulsations about the eyes, weak
pulse, thin watery & fetid evacuations, and
a greenish or dark bilious vomiting;
with a great feeling of weight & oppression
at the epigastric region.

The cause of this stage of the disease we
will defer and pass on to consider the
second ~~stage~~, Cholera Asphyxia, Asiatic
or Malignant Asiatic Cholera.

This stage of the disease is the worst and
most malignant form in which it
can be manifest; hence its name, ~~being~~
fatal in many cases before medical aid
can be procured. Like the Snow of the forest
it has been looked upon with dread as the
King of diseases, baffling the skill of the
entire Medical faculty, carrying desolation
destruction and horror wherever it goes.
Thanks unto the great Father, the day has
arrived that man has the predominance.
The Snow of the forest has been tamed &
made subject to his control; and that
too through the powerful intellect & instrument
— talia.

of our worthy leader who first wielded
the neopons (placed in his hands) to
establish the great law of cure. "Similia
Similibus Curantur" now so successfully
being practiced throughout the world.
Much has been said & written upon this
disease in regard to its origin, its true
cause, and its contagious character.
All allow that when this disease prevails
there is something floating in the atmosphere
which serves to deteriorate that atmosphere
usually termed Cholera Miasm, but when
it is or from whence it comes they do not
attempt to explain.

We will now pass to consider some of the
symptoms which characterize this disease
in its most malignant form.
On the first stage of this disease, the patient
is suddenly attacked (while in normal
health) with great prostration of bodily power.
Laziness & oppression at the precordial region,
his limbs give way beneath him, he is prostrated.
His countenance changes & assumes a death
like appearance; his eyes sink in, his face
turns blue and icy cold, and also the rest
of his body, giving to the hand that sensa-
tion

which you feel on touching the body
of one already dead; and in severe
cases respiration ceases, the pulse are
not perceptible, and there seems to be
a suspension of all the vital forces of
the body; and you see stamped upon the
features an expression of dread & anxiety.
He has no pain, no vomiting, no purging,
but is able to speak and more he will lay
his hand upon the breast and raise a
heavy moan, and express these feelings in
a language which I have often heard
used "Oh. My heart is leaving me"

Let us turn our attention for a while to
the cause of this disease and see first if we
can ascertain what Cholera is, and why it
prevails at one season more than another,
and why certain locations are visited
by its ravages and others ^{are} exempt from its
influence, also why some become victims
to the destroyer and others go unharmed.
It is allowed by all that the atmosphere
which we breathe is composed of different
Gasses, viz Nitrogen & Oxygen, with a small
portion of Carbon & Hydrogen. It is necessary
for the sustenance and support of animal
life, that these gasses exist in certain proportions

— hours

Some being supporters of that life while others are destructive to it.

This being the true condition of a pure and healthy atmosphere, may we not expect that during those dry hot sultry seasons the atmosphere becomes adulterated with those Gasses which are not supporters of life, that there is then a deficiency of Oxygen in the atmosphere, consequently a great want of Electricity which condition absorbs the Electricity from our systems and renders us negative and susceptible to the effects of the adulterated atmosphere we breathe; which has a surplus of those Gasses which are inimical to life which has been generated from the low marshy places, stagnant ~~parts~~ of water & decayed animal and vegetable matter. It is at those seasons when we find the atmosphere in this condition that Cholera & other Epidemics prevail, and why? because, as we have already said, there is a great want of Electricity in the atmosphere, a deficiency of Oxygen and a surplus of those gasses which are so destructive to life. Our systems become debilitated and in a negative state from the

the effects of the excessive heat and the
inhalation of the impure air we breathe.
Thus are we rendered susceptible to the
inspiration or infection of the Cholera
Miasm (so called) which is floating in
the atmosphere, which is nothing more
nor less than the several poisonous Gases
which compose the adulterated atmosphere
at those seasons. (viz Carbon Hydrogen & Nitrogen)
which are the component parts of that well
known poisonous and destructive, Hydrocyanic
or Prussic Acid Gas.

This may be considered
the true condition of the atmosphere at the
seasons when this disease prevails. As has
already been said we do not have a sufficient
quantity of Oxygen present to support life
or to counteract the bad effects arising from
the impure air, and our systems have become
negative, and susceptible to the effects of a
poisonous Gas which we are daily and hourly
absorbing from the atmosphere, which is retained
in our systems; and the effect is the
same that it would be to inhale the same
quantity daily from the bottle of the Apothecary.
We may inhale a small quantity with im-
munity, but if we hourly add, that small quan-
- tity.

before the effect of the previous dose had passed from the system, he soon begins to feel its serious effects, and if continued, prostration, and a suspension of all the vital forces or functions of the body is the result. This is the true condition in Cholera, produced by the constant inhalation of the poisonous gas absorbed a sufficient quantity from the atmosphere to produce the effects already described, termed Cholera.

We have endeavored to show to the clear and investigating mind, what Cholera is, also why it prevails at certain seasons. We will now pass to consider why certain locations ^{& persons} become the recipients of this disease while others are exempt from its influence. It is a well known fact that those serous gases already considered, have a great affinity for the low marshy districts, stagnant waters, damp ill ventilated & crowded dwellings; and wherever you will find & pass decayed animal or vegetable matter filth or impurity of any description then you will find the hot beds for these gases; hence its ravages among the lower class of the community, who are confined to the narrow

filthy streets damp ill ventilated dwelling
who also are the class who use more of the
kind of food, both vegetable & animal
which generates the said Gasses in abundance
and they being constantly surrounded
by these impurities are ever under its
influence.

The reason why one person is more
liable to an attack than another is because
his system is in a debilitated state; per-
haps from the debilitated state of the diges-
tive system, torpid Liver; which condition
is always favorable to the infection of
the Miasm. Because owing to the weakness
of the digestive organs the food remains
within the stomach undigested until
decomposition actually takes place, when
you will find the said Gasses generated in
abundance, and if the person has eaten
of unwholesome food or unripe fruit, you will
see a sufficiency of Gass generated from
that food, which will produce the effects of
the system which we often see termed Cholera.
We think that we can safely say that in
all cases of the disease, nine out of ten
are those, whose digestive systems are in a
weak debilitated state, or those who are

addicted to the use of intoxicating drinks
Such at least has been our experience
During the prevalence of Cholera last season
(1854) in this City, in the treatment of sixty
— five cases (from July 15th to Aug 20th) every case
more of the kind mentioned

In regard to its contagious character
suffice it to say, that according to the
common acceptance of the term, we con-
— sider it of a noncontagious character

And it can only be considered infectious
as a person's system is rendered susceptible
to its influence as already described.

To the clear mind we think we have fully
shown what Cholera is and its true cause
Also why certain locations and persons become
the recipients of the miasm while others are
exempt from it; Also that instead of many
diseases there exists but one; Not as is generally
understood that Cholera does not exist un-
till the patient is either in a cramp or
collapsed state, but that it is Cholera from
the first sensation of nausea or pain.
The many appellations used should only
be applied in the different stages to denote
the severity or malignancy and the location of

the disease. There is but one great original Cause for the existence of the disease in its several forms. For instance a person may swallow and absorb a sufficient quantity of the said Gas to produce that irritation upon the alimentary canal termed Cholera or he may absorb a still greater quantity and produce a still more formidable set of symptoms. Nausea, Griping, Purging and vomiting, which is termed Cholera Morbus. And if the patient is of a weak, debilitated system, the quantity already absorbed together with the addition of unwholesome food or unripe fruit, a sufficient quantity of Gas will be generated from that matter to produce a still more group of symptoms already described under the head of Asiatic Cholera. Cases of this kind I have often met with during the last Cholera Season.

This gas does not affect all Systems alike. I have always found that where persons of a weak digestive System were attacked, perfect prostration has been the result. The vital forces or functions being entirely suspended; neither pulse nor respiration being perceptible; the body being in a cold and collapsed state.

In those who are addicted to the use of
intoxicating drinks, with strong nervous
systems and muscular power, the disease
assumes a different form, more of a
spasmodic character, every muscle in
the body being cramped to an astonishing
extent, there also being present more or
less of heat, with considerable cerebral dis-
turbance

We think we have clearly shown that
there is one great cause which produces
the disease in question; that the many
effects are only modifications of that
disease produced upon different systems.
Now if we admit the fact may we not
be justified in saying, that a remedy
which will remove the symptoms or
effects in the worst & most malignant
form, will remove them in all stages.
I am aware that specific remedies to
many of my Homoeopathic brethren are
rather repugnant, and the idea is very
unpopular, therefore I will only state as far
as my experience will take me
At the commencement of the last Cholera
Season I selected my remedies (some of which

had I ever known of being used in the
disease, with the intention of subduing
and overcoming the disease in all cases
I used them in the first case I had, which
was a very severe one, that of Colicopre
and one of the most horror stricken
cases I have ever witnessed, and to the
utter astonishment of all present, in
less than one hour the patient was in a
profuse perspiration & quiet sleep, and
out of danger. In a few hours I had another
case much like the first, with mor-
buous & Muscular power, consequently more
of a spasmic character, also much
delirium, I here used the same remedies
with the same success, and in all suc-
sequent cases I used the same remedies
with all confidence; in all stages of the
disease, from its earliest and most incipient
stages to those of Cramps, Colicopre and
Rice water discharges and in no case did
they ever fail of producing the desired re-
sults; even in the most malignant
form. Therefore I feel justified in advo-
cating specific Homoeopathy, and if
more attention were paid to the study
of the true cause of disease instead

looking so much after the effects, I
am confident our Matern Medicine
would not be filled up with imaginary
symptoms as it now is of a thousand and
one remedies such as the Saccharis, Apis, Lac
which serve only as stumbling blocks to
the young student in Medicine

Philad^a Jan^y 1st 1855

Henry. T. Judah, Thayer